

Proactive Release

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The following Cabinet papers and related Cabinet minutes have been proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Title	Reference
<i>Cabinet Minute of Decision – Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters and Hon Casey Costello July 2024</i>	CAB-24-MIN-0287
<i>Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – 1-6 July 2024</i>	

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA). Where this is the case, the relevant sections of the OIA that would apply have been identified. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Key to OIA redaction codes:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government; and,
- 7(b): to prejudice relations between any of the Governments of New Zealand: the self-governing State of the Cook Islands: the self-governing State of Niue.



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters and Hon Casey Costello - July 2024

Portfolio Foreign Affairs

On 5 August 2024, Cabinet **noted** the report from the Rt Hon Winston Peters under CAB-24-SUB-0287 on his travel, together with Hon Casey Costello, from 1 to 6 July 2024, to the Solomon Islands, Nauru, and Niue for bilateral visits.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

Proactively Released by the
Minister of Foreign Affairs

~~Restricted~~

Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – 1-6 July 2024

This paper recommends that Cabinet note this report on recent travel to Solomon Islands, Nauru, and Niue from 1-6 July 2024. The travelling delegation included Minister of Customs and Minister for Seniors Casey Costello; Chair of the Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Trade Select Committee (FADTC) Tim van de Molen; Hon Jenny Salesa (Chair of Labour Pacific Caucus); and FADTC members Hon Damien O'Connor and Teanau Tuiono. A two-person media delegation accompanied the delegation throughout.

Report

- 1 This travel, to three locations in five days, demonstrated the New Zealand Government's renewed commitment to meaningful engagement with Pacific partners. The pace of engagements - which included substantive meetings with political leaders, visits to local projects, and talks with stakeholders - were high impact and high profile. The visits were a tangible demonstration of this Government's commitment to being more present, more active, as well as good listeners and partners in the region.
- 2 Common interests discussed across the three countries included bilateral and development relationships, security and geopolitical challenges, how to advance people-to-people links, economic development, labour mobility, and broader regional dynamics. Engagements reinforced the close links with diaspora populations and highlighted the continued need to support Pacific and diaspora communities in New Zealand.
- 3 The participation of a cross-party delegation also demonstrated a sustainable interest in longevity and depth of relationships between Pacific partners and New Zealand parliamentarians. This point was noted by interlocutors as a unique and meaningful contribution to bilateral relationships.

Solomon Islands

- 4 The programme in Solomon Islands included bilateral meetings with political leaders (Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and a range of other Ministers); a reception at the New Zealand High Commission to engage with New Zealand Manaaki Scholars (including a Solomon Islands Cabinet Minister who studied at Massey University in Palmerston North); a moving visit to the RNZAF WWII memorial *Bloody Ridge*; and, importantly, a visit outside Honiara to Seghe in Western Province, where the delegation had the privilege of being part of the handover ceremony for the upgraded airfield – an

Independence Day gift from New Zealand and Australia in partnership with the Solomon Islands Government. The delegation gained a strong impression of the economic and social benefits to the local communities of the connectivity that the airfield would offer.

- 5 Minister Costello met separately with the Minister of Police and National Security and Correctional Services. They discussed New Zealand's support for Solomon Islands' recent election and general policing assistance through the ongoing Policing Support Programme, s6(a)
s6(a) Minister Costello also spoke briefly with the Police Commissioner.
- 6 Following on from the brief visit in May after the Solomon Islands general election in April s6(a)
s6(a) this was an important visit to demonstrate New Zealand's ongoing commitment to the bilateral relationship. s6(a)

Nauru

- 7 The visit to Nauru was particularly meaningful for being the first bilateral visit by a New Zealand Foreign Minister since the early 1990s. The delegation was privileged to be hosted for an official dinner by the President of Nauru and several ministers and MPs and had separate formal meetings with the President and the Foreign Minister. The discussions highlighted the challenges Nauru faces s6(a) as well as the priorities for the Government of Nauru and the bilateral relationship. Themes included climate change, economic development and resilience, education, deep sea mining, justice sector support, immigration, and the Micronesian Games in 2026. The quality of the conversations demonstrated the importance to the relationship and to our partners of showing up face-to-face, especially given New Zealand does not have a diplomatic presence on the island (only Australia and China do).
- 8 s6(a)

It will be important that New Zealand remains attuned to the expectations of Micronesian partners going forward.

Niue

9 It was important to visit Niue in the 50th year of self-government in free association with New Zealand to emphasise the special relationship we share, and to further the conversations had by the Prime Minister during his visit earlier in the year. Niue's generous hosting saw the delegation meet with the Premier both formally and informally across the two-day programme; hold engagements with a range of senior government representatives; and attend events with local communities, including at the Niue High School and a "ground-breaking" ceremony, lending momentum to the New Zealand-funded renewable energy project announced by the Prime Minister when in Niue. A tour on the New Zealand-funded Search and Rescue vessel also highlighted Niue's vulnerabilities to climate change.

10 s7(b)(iii), s7(b)(i)

The announcement of a new package of funding designed to provide public financial management and public policy capacity was warmly welcomed, which responds to workforce constraints while helping to improve Niue's accountability processes.

11 s7(b)(iii), s7(b)(i)

Proactive release

12 This paper will be proactively released as per Cabinet Office Circular CO (18) 4 on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website. The paper will be subject to redaction as appropriate on the grounds set out under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendation

13 I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt. Hon Winston Peters

Minister of Foreign Affairs